

'Fatal Attraction' compelling sexual drama

By Mary Courtis
Emerald Contributor

In the film "Fatal Attraction," lawyer Dan Gallagher (Michael Douglas) has it all — a cushy career, a wonderful wife, a darling daughter and a new home in the country.

So what's a nice guy like this doing with a wild, impulsive woman like Alex Forrest (Glenn Close)? Is it the old saying that opposites attract, or just that too much bliss can be boring? A torrid weekend tryst may be just what he needs to get his blood flowing again. Then he can heave a sigh of relief, relax back into the familiarity of home and family, and forget it ever happened.

Review

★ ★ ★

Unfortunately, simple indiscretions are no longer simple. Sex with a stranger is often unsafe, and meddling with minds, hearts and emotions can have its own dark consequences too. In this case, Alex is appalled by Dan's assumption that marriage is his immunity against responsibility.

"How dare you think you can just walk into my life, turn it topsy-turvy, and then just walk out again?" she says.

"Hey, you knew I was married," Dan responds. "I didn't try to hide anything. You knew the rules."

Alex disagrees. In fact, she disagrees so much that she tries to commit suicide. What's a decent guy to do? Dan binds Alex's wrists, stays with her and encourages her to see a doctor, all of which convinces Alex that he does care more about her than he realizes or admits. Obviously,



Dan Gallagher (Michael Douglas) tries to comfort a distraught Alex Forrest (Glenn Close) in Paramount Pictures' thriller, "Fatal Attraction."

viously, this is one misunderstanding that could turn murderous, and on both sides.

The strength of "Fatal Attraction" is not its spine tingling chills or steamy sex scenes — of which there are plenty — but the scope and complexity of the characters.

Dan has his spots of insensitivity. But basically he's a likeable, caring person

desperately trying to balance his desire to protect and preserve his family against his guilt and sympathy for Alex.

As for Alex, she seems less vicious than sad. She is a woman driven over the edge by emotion and circumstance, who finds violence the only effective attention-getter.

"All I'm trying to do is get you to acknowledge your responsibility," she tells Dan at

one point. "If you'd talk to me, I wouldn't have to act this way."

And when Dan calls her crazy, she retorts, "Crazy?! I'm crazy just because I won't let you treat me like some slut you can just bang a few times and throw away?"

It is hard to decide who is more of the victim here.

Credit for the movie's appeal must go to its two main actors. Douglas weaves his way

brilliantly between outer calm and inner turmoil while Close comes unglued with a gradual and natural insidiousness. Because of their performances, "Fatal Attraction" attracts on many levels and proves happily that director Adrian Lyne has come a long way since "Flashdance."

"Fatal Attraction" shows nightly at Cinema World at the Valley River Twin Center.

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